

**Eastern RI Conservation District
PO Box 158 – Tiverton, RI 02878 – (401)-816-5667**

**ERICD Board Meeting
March 10, 2015 7:00 pm
Sandywoods, 53 Muse Way (Blue Building), Tiverton, RI 02878**

I. Call to Order, Introductions: The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:14 pm. Present were: Directors: Emerson Wildes (Chair), Ron Mucci, Russ Smith, Dick Hart; District Manager: Jessica Blackledge; NRCS: Melissa Hayden.

II. Changes/ Additions to Agenda: No changes or additions to the agenda were made.

III. Minutes from February 10, 2015 Meeting: Emerson requested a slight revision to his Directors report. This revision will be made and posted in the final draft of the minutes from February 10, 2015. Motion was made by Russ to accept the minutes with stated revision. The motion was seconded by Ron and passed with Dick abstaining.

IV. Reports:

A. NRCS – Melissa provided a written NRCS activity report and provided training and information on NRCS's Wind Break practice.

B. Financials –Financial reports were distributed to the Board via email in advance of the meeting and via hard copy at the meeting. Russ made moved that the Board is in receipt of the financial reports. Motion was seconded by Ron and passed unanimously.

C. RISCC – A brief written report and the minutes from the February 19th SCC meeting were provided via email by Ramona LeBlanc in advance of this meeting.

D. RIACD – The Chair stated there was nothing to report this month.

E. District Manager – DM provided a written report and provided highlights to the board. Russ moved to replenish the Petty Cash Account. Ron seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

F. Directors

- ~ Russ reported that WADK has rescheduled "Sandywoods Day" to March 25th and invited ERICD to participate.
- ~ Emerson reported on attending the Ag Partnership Symposium held on March 10th.
- ~ Ron reported that the NOFA Winter Conference will be held on March 29th 8:30-4:30 at Hope & Main in Warren, RI.
- ~ Dick reported that geese are back by the 100's in local fields. (Something about 5-7 pm on 3/23/15, spectrum energy). Also reported that PA now

requires that anyone who produces manure on farm or uses imported manure needs to have a manure management plan - written down officially. Posed the question of whether RI should consider something similar.

V. Old Business

A. Board Recruitment – DM reported on conversations had with Nancy Wilson and Jay Miller regarding their interest in pursuing Board Membership. Nancy is traveling but should be back mid-March at which time she intends to submit her completed nomination forms. Jay hopes to attend the next Board meeting. Both have been provided copies of the Directors Handbook.

B. Cooperative Projects

- 1. Sandywoods Farm** – Standing agenda item. DM reported that the Sandywoods Community Garden Co-op will have their monthly meeting on Sat., March 14, 2015 at 11am.
- 2. RWU Sustainability Students** – DM reported on the students interested in working with Sandywoods and the various projects they will be working on including strategic planning for the Farmers Market, development of a YMCA Summer Program Gardening component, design and construction of a sustainable garden shed for the Community Garden and design of an open-air amphitheater. DM will continue to meet with Students and partners to develop these projects and partnerships.

C. Proposed District Record Book – Standing agenda item. Nothing to report and no discussion/action was taken this month.

D. Proposed Grant Committee – Standing agenda item. Nothing to report and no discussion/action was taken this month.

E. CTA Agreement Match Needs – DM reported that she has made contact with Newport Water regarding their willingness to provide match monies to this agreement. NW is willing to provide the match needed under this agreement. DM will be working with NW staff to inform them of the specific standards and reporting required with this agreement.

F. Town Funding Requests – DM again reported that the Town Funding Request Letters went out at the end of January. DM had provided the Board with hard copy of the Request Letter and a list of contacts to whom Request Letters were sent at the ERICD meeting in February. The Chair requested these documents be emailed to the Board so all have a copy.

G. RI Land Trust Council Request – DM reported that this event was canceled due to low registration numbers. The Land Trust may or may not reschedule this event. DM reported that she asked Rupert Friday to keep her posted in the event this will be rescheduled so we can again assist with publicity.

VI. New Business

A. RI SCC Activity on FFOS Planning

- 1. Plan Development Options** – SCC has reported that they are still working with NRCS the Districts and DEM to develop options for Farm Plans. The direction provided is to continue the halt on plan development, assuring enrollees that there is currently no timeline for plan development while the SCC and partners determine further options. If an enrollee is particularly interested in having their plan developed ASAP (for various reasons), SCC has directed the Districts to fulfil that request.
- 2. Certified Conservation Planner Training** – DM reported that conversations at the last SCC meeting were trending towards developing an agreement with NRCS for Whole Farm Conservation Plan development whereby District Staff would be trained to develop NRCS conservation plans. This would provide an additional options to FFOS enrollees for plan development. If found to be feasible, this would require District staff to become NRCS Certified Conservation Planners. There will be a training held in ME in July that would provide this certification. At this time it is unclear if there are seats available at this training or how staff will be compensated for their time associated with this training, if required.

B. RI Ag Council Membership Renewal – DM reported that the annual RI Ag Council membership dues are currently due. Dick moved that the dues be paid. Ron seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

C. Special Project Ideas to Support the Monarch – DM reported that she has received a second communication from Isobel Hart with suggestions of projects that will support Monarchs and their habitat.

D. ERICD Technology Needs – DM reported that the District laptop suffered a critical failure at the beginning of March. DM has recovered almost all files and emails, but had to spend quite a bit of time reinstalling the OS and all programs needed to conduct business. She requested that the Board be considering replacing the district computer as it is approaching 4 years old and may experience more failure events as time progresses.

VIII. Adjourn – The Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 9:45pm.

Next Meeting: April 14, 2015 at 7PM at Sandywoods.